IN THE CLAIMS:

Please AMEND claims 1 and 2, as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An image heating apparatus for heating an image formed on a recording material, comprising:

a flexible sleeve member;

a guide member provided in said flexible sleeve member, for guiding a direction of rotation of said flexible sleeve member;

a regulating member provided opposed to an end surface of said sleeve member, for regulating movement of said sleeve member in a generatrix direction, said regulating member having a flange portion opposed to ~~an~~ the end surface of said sleeve member and a sliding portion opposed to an inner surface of an end portion of said sleeve member~~, for regulating an end of said sleeve member~~;

a rotatable member contacting with an outer surface of said sleeve member;

a nip portion formed by contacting said flexible sleeve member with said rotatable member, for heating the image formed on the recording material,~~; and~~

wherein a plurality of ribs are provided on said guide member at least at a portion upstream of said nip portion with respect the direction of rotation of said sleeve member ~~along a direction of a generatrix of said flexible sleeve member~~;, and

wherein ~~said plurality of ribs are positioned in a manner a contour of said plurality of ribs is positioned inside~~ a contour of the sliding portion of said regulating member is

larger than a contour of said plurality of ribs ~~along a longitudinal direction of said image heating apparatus~~.

2. (Currently Amended) An image heating apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the contour of said sliding portion of said regulating member downstream of the nip portion with respect to the direction of rotation of said sleeve member is substantially symmetrical with the contour of the sliding portion of said regulating member upstream of the nip portion.

3. (Original) An image heating apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein there is a convex portion on said sliding portion of said regulating member downstream of the nip portion with respect to the direction of rotation of said sleeve member.

4. (Original) An image heating apparatus according to Claim 3, wherein the height of said guide member on the upstream side of the nip portion with respect to the direction of rotation of said sleeve member is lower than the height thereof on the downstream side.

5. (Original) An image heating apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising a heating member held on a surface of said guide member adjacent tot he nip portion.